I:Gordon E-4, 9 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his wife's house, but visits it only after dark (p. 76). In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka Iaiaka*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*mâw kyntheí*, p. 136), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side.

In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure (pp. 106—109). The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are those most frequently worshipped (p. 107). The two protectors of the household are goddesses (p. 112), though with them is also reverted the first father of the clan, *U Thlóbtang*.

Priestesses consist of all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies (p. 125); in one important state, Khyrim, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions (p. 70).

The Khasi language, so far as known, is the only member of the Mon-Khmer family which possesses a grammatical gender, distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine; and here also the feminine nouns immensely preponderate (p. 206). The pronouns of the second (*nú*, *phí*) and third person (*ú*, *bá*) have separate forms for the sexes in the singular, but in the plural only one is used (*phí*, *bá*), and this is the plural form of the feminine singular.

L. Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

Raja (probably the Raja of Jaintia), and the Assamese Barpho- 614
kan. They fled to a place called Lyndiangmaihli, near Lyngkye- 773
dem. Finding this place uninhabitable as a home, the family split up into four divisions. One division returned to Jowai, where it increased and multiplied and afterwards grew into the Lalu clan, another went to Nongkhlaw and became the Diengdoh Kylla clan; another went to Mawsing and formed what is now known as the Pariong clan; the fourth, after some vicissitudes of fortune, went to Rangjyrteh and Cherra, at which place is established the powerful Diengdohbah clan, and became afterwards one of the chief *mantri* or minister clans of this state. I have quoted the history of the origin of the Diengdoh clan at some length, to show what I consider to be an example of the Khasi conception of how the clan was formed, i.e. from a common ancestress, all of the clans having traditions more or less of descent from some particular *Kiaw* or ancestress. This story moreover is remarkable as pointing to a Khasi migration from beyond the Kopili river to their present abode. The clans of the present 614
day are nothing more or less than overgrown families, they are 769
bound together by the religious tie of ancestor-worship in common, and of a common tribal sepulchre, except in cases of clans which have, owing to their size, split up into several sub-divisions, like the Diengdoh clan; each sub-division possessing their own *mawbahs*. Ancestor-worship in common and tribal sepulchres in common seem to indicate that the original unit was the family and not the tribe, for there would be no reason for the members of a clan to worship the same household gods and to deposit the remains of the clan members in the same tomb unless there was some strong tie, such as that of consanguinity, binding them together. It has been already 614
mentioned that each of these clans is strictly exogamous; this 582.
again supports the family origin theory. A Khasi can commit no greater sin than to marry within the tribe. Some of the clans are prohibited moreover from intermarriage with other clans, because of such clans being of common descent. If the 614
titles (see Appendix) are carefully examined, it will be seen that some of them bear the names of animals, such as the *Shwish* or monkey clan, the *Thaw* or crab clan, or of trees, such as the Diengdoh clan (already referred to). The

St Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

SECTION IV.

RELIGION.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF POPULAR BELIEFS.

The Khasis have a vague belief in a God the Creator, U Blei Nongthaw, although this deity, owing, no doubt, to the influence of the neighbours, is frequently given the attributes of the feminine gender, cf., Ka Ia Synshar. The Khasis cannot, however, be said to worship the Supreme God, although it is true that they sometimes invoke him when sacrificing and in times of trouble. The religion of the Khasis may be described as animism or spirit-worship, or rather, the propitiation of spirits both good and evil on certain occasions, principally in times of trouble. The propitiation of these spirits is carried out either by priests (Lyngdoh), or by old men well versed in the arts of necromancy, and as the Lyngdoh or wise man deals with good as well as evil spirits, and, as often as not, with the good spirits of ancestors, the propitiation of these spirits may be said to partake of the nature of Shamanism. A very prominent feature of the Khasi beliefs is the propitiation of ancestors, but this will be described separately. There is a vague belief amongst the Khasi of a future state. It is believed that the spirits of the dead, whose funeral ceremonies have been duly performed, go to the home or garden of God, where there are graves of betel-nut trees; hence the expression for the departed, who have lived to sing a blei (be wise in eating betel-nut in God's home), the idea of supreme happiness to the Khasi being to eat betel-nut uninterruptedly. The spirits of those whose funeral ceremonies have not been duly performed are believed to take the forms of animals, birds, or

1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

[illegible] insects, and to roam on this earth; but this idea of transmigration of souls has been probably borrowed from the Hindus. Divar writes that although the ideas of a Godhead are not clearly grasped, yet a supreme creator is acknowledged, and that the following is the tradition relating to the creation of man. "God in the beginning having created man, placed him on the earth, but on returning to look at him, found he had been destroyed by the evil spirit. This happened a second time, whereupon the Deity created first a dog, then a man; and the dog, who kept watch, prevented the devil from destroying the man, and the work of the Deity was thus preserved." The Khasis, apparently, do not believe in punishment after death, at least there is no idea of hell, although the spirits of those who have died under the ban of *any* remain unseen, being obliged to wander about the earth in different forms, as noted above. The spirits worshipped by the Khasis are many in number, those of the Syntengs being specially numerous. The particular spirit to be propitiated is ascertained by egg-breaking. The offering acceptable to the spirit is similarly ascertained and is then made. If the particular sacrifice does not produce the result desired, a fowl is sacrificed; the entrails being then examined, an augury is drawn, and the sacrifice begins afresh. As the process of egg-breaking is believed to be peculiar * to the Khasis amongst the hill tribes, a separate description of it is given in the Appendix. It should be remarked that the Khasis never symbolize their gods by means of images, their worship being offered to the spirit only. The following are some of the principal spirits worshipped by the Khasis and Syntengs, omitting the spirits of deceased ancestors such as *Ka Iawbei*, a *Diewlong*, and a *Seidnia*, which will be described under the heading of ancestor-worship.

U Blei or the god of the waters, who is propitiated yearly by the sacrifice of a goat and a cock.

U Blei synmuwiah god of water, used for drinking and cooking purposes. This god is similarly propitiated once a year, so that the water supply may remain pure.

* Sir Charles Lyall has pointed out that the Bhils possess this custom; it is probably borrowed from the Khasis.

I: Gurdon E-4 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

and offered to help them with their cultivation. The Khasis also refused her, saying they were capable of managing their own cultivation, and at the same time told her to go to the country of the Bhois and Syntengs, i.e. the Jaintia Hills. Acting on this advice, she went to the village of Nongphyllut in the Jaintia Hills, where the people again turned a deaf ear to her. She proceeded to Mulngain village in Jaintia, at the foot of the Jaintia Hills, and ascended from thence to Rymbai, where she met a man who conducted her to the house of the Siem, who consented that she and her children should live with him. Ka Tulem then apportioned to her children various duties in the house of the Siem as follows:—Ka Basong was to look after the young unmarried folk, and was to supervise their daily labour and to prosper their trading operations at the markets. Next Ka Basong was given a place at the foot of the king post, *tnai riabat*, and her duty was to befriend young men in battle. Then came *Ka Longkhmierwiid*, alias *ka Thah-bulong*, who said, "There are no more rooms in the house for my occupation, so I will go and live in the forest, and him who turns not his coat when I meet him I will make mad." *Finally* came *U Lamyngkhud*, who elected to live with his youngest sister inside the house.

There are special sacrifices offered to these household deities. The leaves of the *soing*, or Khasi oak, are wrapped round the post of the house, and a fowl is sacrificed and other formalities are observed which it would be tedious to describe in detail. The legend of the arrival of Ka Tulem with her children in the Syntong country from a distant clime is interesting in that it perhaps indicates the possibility of the migration of these people, i.e. the Syntengs, in ancient times from some distant place to their present abode.

ANCESTOR-WORSHIP.

The Khasis not only revere the memories of deceased ancestors, but they adore them by means of offerings, which are sometimes periodical, and sometimes made when thought neces-

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

87 ney, as in times of trouble. These offerings take the shape of articles of food which are theoretically partaken of by the shades of the deceased ancestors, the idea of making such offerings being very similar to that of the Hindus when they offer the "*pinda*," or cake, to nine generations of ancestors, i.e. to propitiate the shades of the departed, and to obtain their help thereby. U Hamon Bai Dkenglah writes that, "the real religious demand" amongst the Khasis is the *ai kaw*, or giving of food to the spirits of deceased ancestors, in order that the latter may aid the living members of the clan with their help, and bless them. To honour dead ancestors is the duty of every Khasi, and he who wilfully neglects this duty, it is believed, will neither receive their help, nor be defended from the influence of the numerous spirits of evil in which the Khasis believe. Amongst the Syntengs, a few days after depositing the bones in the ancestral tomb, the ceremony of feeding the spirits of the dead is performed. At this ceremony there are some families which give two pigs for each person of the family who is dead, and there are some who give one. The pigs are taken to the *diep-sang*, or pigs house of the clan. Presumably, pigs are usually offered to the shades only of those members of the family whose remains have been recently deposited in the clan cromlech. In the chapter dealing with memorial stones the reader will notice how many of these are erected to the memory of deceased ancestors, and how they bear the names of such ancestors, e.g. *Ka Iawbei* (the first grandmother), *U Kaidwin*, or *U Iai ranglah* (the first maternal male). It was the custom in former days to make offerings of food upon the flat table-stones to the spirits of the deceased ancestors, and this is still the case in places in the interior of the district. This practice, however, may be said to be largely dying out, it being now commonly the custom to make the offerings in the house, either annually, or at times when it is thought necessary to invoke the aid of the departed. Such acts of devotion may well be said to partake of the nature of worship. As has been the case in other countries, and amongst other people, it is possible that the Khasi gods of to-day are merely the spirits of glorified deceased ancestors transformed, as has happened with some of the gods of the

1: Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

Shinto Pantheon of Japan. It may be interesting to note that the ancient Shinto cult of Japan possesses some features in common with the ancestor-worship of the Khasis. Take the funeral ceremonies. With both people we find the dead laid out in the house, food placed before the corpse, and the funeral ceremonies taking place, accompanied by music and dancing. Mr. Lafcadio Hearn, in an interesting book on Japan, writes "that in ancient times the Japanese performed ceremonies at regular intervals at the tombs of deceased members of the family, and food and drink were then served to the spirits;" this is exactly what the Khasis used to do at their cenotaphs. This, apparently, was the practice in Japan before the "spirit tablet" had been introduced from China, when the worship of the ancestors was transferred from the tomb to the home. We have an exactly similar instance of evolution amongst the Khasis of the present day, i.e. the transfer of the ancestor cult from the flat table-stones erected in honour of deceased ancestors to the home. Last, but not least, is the idea common to both people, that no family or clan can prosper which does not duly perform the worship of deceased ancestors; this, as Hearn puts it, is "the fundamental idea underlying every persistent ancestor-worship, i.e. that the welfare of the living depends upon the welfare of the dead." The "Khasi Mystic," in an interesting article, notes some further points of resemblance between the methods of ancestor-worship adopted by the two people. The following instances may be quoted. Amongst the Japanese the spirits of those who fall in battle are said to help their fellow-warriors who are still fighting. The "Khasi Mystic" quotes a similar belief as having existed amongst the Khasis in former days. The remains of Japanese warriors who die in battle are said to be reverently taken to the warrior's home at the first opportunity. The Khasis do likewise, the clothing in default of the ashes of Khasi transport coolies, who were employed on military expeditions on the North-Eastern Frontier, having been carried home by the survivors to present to the dead men's relations, who then performed the ceremonies prescribed by custom for those who have died violent or unnatural deaths. Of all deceased ancestors the Khasis revere *Ki Iewbei* the most, the word *Iewbei* being made up of

1:Garden E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

'ew, short for *kiew* (grandmother), and *ba*, mother. *Ka Iawbei* is the primeval ancestress of the clan. She is to the Khasis what the "tribal mother" was to old Celtic and Teutonic genealogists, and we have an interesting parallel to the reverence of the Khasis for *Ka Iawbei* in the Celtic goddess Brigit, the tribal mother of the Brigantes. Later on, like Ka Iawbei, she was canonised, and became St. Bridget.*

The greater number of the flat table-stones we see in front of the standing monoliths in these hills are erected in honour of *Ka Iawbei*. In former times, it was the custom to offer food to her on these stones. In cases of family quarrels, or dissensions amongst the members of the same clan, which it is desired to bring to a peaceful settlement, it is customary to perform a sacrifice to the first mother, "*Ka Iawbei*." They first of all take an augury by breaking eggs, and if it appears from the broken egg-shells that *Ka Iawbei* is offended, they offer to her a white cloth, and sacrifice a hen. On these occasions incantations are muttered, and a small drum, called, "*Ka 'ding ding dong*," is beaten. It is not unlikely that the Khasi household deities, *Ka lei sing* and *Ka law lo jingrem*, to whom pujas are offered for the welfare of the house, are also *Ka Iawbei* in disguise. Notwithstanding the strong influence of the matriarchate, we find that U Thawlang, the first father and the husband of *Ka Iawbei*, is also revered. To him on occasions of domestic trouble a sacrificial cock is sacrificed, and a *jingthawlang*, or shoulder cut is offered. This puja is called *bolo tap Thawlang*, i.e. covering the grandfather. The following incantation to U Thawlang is then chanted:—"Oh, father Thawlang, who hast enabled me to be born, who hast given me my stature and my life, I have wronged thee, oh father, to not offended, for I have given thee a pledge and a sign, i.e. a red and white shoulder cut. Do not deliver me into the power of (the goddess of) illness, I have offered thee the propitiatory :—oh that thou mayest carry me in thine arms, and that I may be aware of thee, my father Thawlang." We see clearly from the above prayer that the Khasi idea is that the spirit of the deceased male ancestor is capable of

* Karl Pearson's essay on "mother age civilisation."

L Garden E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

being in a position to help his descendant in times of trouble. The same thought underlies the extreme reverence with which *Ka Iawbei* is regarded. Thus we see a striking point of resemblance between the Khasi ancestor-worship and the ancient Shinto cult of Japan, as described by Mr. Lafcadio Hearn. *U Suid-Sin*, or *u Kni Shyngkah*, the first maternal uncle, i.e. the elder brother of *Ka Iawbei*, is also much revered. It will also be noticed under the heading of memorial stones that the great central upright monolith of the *mawbynna*, or memorial stones, is erected in his honour. The influence of the *kni*, or mother's elder brother, in the Khasi family is very great, for it is he who is the manager on behalf of the mother, his position in the Khasi family being very similar to that of the *karta* in the Hindu joint family. It is on this account that he is so much reverred, and is honoured with a stone which is larger than the other up-right memorial stones after death. It will be seen in the article dealing with "the disposal of the dead," that at Cherra, on the occasion of the burning of the ashes in the cremation of the clan, a part of the attendant ceremonies consists of the preparation of two effigies called *Ka Pawa* and *U Tyngkop*, intended to represent *Ka Iawbei* (the first mother) and *U Suid-Sin* (the first maternal uncle). The Wars of Nongjri have a custom peculiar to themselves. They erect small thatched houses in their compounds, which they call *ting lamid*. When they worship their ancestors they deposit offerings of food in these houses, the idea being that the ancestors will feed on the offerings. These Wars do not erect memorial stones, nor do they collect the ashes of the clan in a common sepulchre; they deposit the ashes in circular cisterns, each family, or *ting*, possessing one. It should further be noted with reference to the Khasi custom of *ai kaw*, or giving food to the spirits of deceased ancestors, that Dr. Frazer, in his "Golden Bough," has mentioned numerous instances of festivals being offered to the spirits of deceased ancestors by the tribes inhabiting the Malay Archipelago. (See pages 402-403 of the "Golden Bough.") Some other points of similarity in customs have already been noticed between the Khasis and certain Malay tribes.

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1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

that they may prosper, that they may obtain rice and fish, that they may possess hundreds and thousands; thus, oh god." The priest then pours liquor on the ground three times from the ground, counting "one, two, three." He then continues the invocation thus, "*Mei*, thou, oh mother; oh grandmother; oh maternal uncle; oh father; oh *Sadd-sia*; oh younger grandmother; oh elder grandmother; oh younger grandfather; oh elder grandfather. As the flesh has fallen (on the floor, i.e. the feast has been prepared), the ring has been put on, the three strips of flesh are ready (alluding to the three dried fish already mentioned), you will all of you (ancestors) give out, you will continue giving strength and spirit (i.e. to the married pair) that they may be well" (and so on, as written in the first invocation). He then pours out the liquor three times as before. He then adjures the sons, the elders, and all the people who do not belong to either of the two clans, and pours out liquor three times as before. The three pieces of dried fish are first placed on the *tympan*, the high rack above the fire-place, then removed and tied to the ridge-pole of the house, amidst shouts of *Ho, hoi, hoi, hoi*. The priest then sacrifices a fowl, and the cock a pig without blemish (also three), to *Sadd-sia* and *Iew-lei* (the spirits of deceased members of the family), and presents them with *Sybbiat*, or pieces of flesh. Two or three days afterwards, the bride, accompanied by her female relations, pays a visit to the bridegroom at his house, and after this they go and come as they like to one another's houses. After two or three children have been born, they take down the pieces of dried fish from the roof and sacrifice two pigs, one on behalf of the husband and another on behalf of the wife. Then they say there can be no possible reason why husband and wife use each other's things and pool their earnings, and if the husband has a house of his own, the wife can go and live with him; this, however, is not the custom amongst many of the Syntengs, who more strictly observe the principles of the matriarchate. The cost of the marriage ceremonies amongst Khasis, Syntengs and Wars, may be put down at between Rs. 50 and Rs. 200 according to the position of the parties.

MEMORIAL STONES AT LAITHOIR.
(From a photograph by Mrs. Murrell.)

1: Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

(b) *Mawbynna*, or mawbyn, which are stones erected to commemorate a parent or some other near relation.

(c) *Maw-umkoi*, which are put up to mark the position of tanks or umkoi, the water of which is supposed to cleanse the bathers and bones of those who have died unnatural deaths.

(d) *Maw-slongthait*, or at table-stones, often accompanied by vertical stones, which are placed in the market-place and by the side of roads to serve as seats for weary travellers. Taking the above main divisions, megalithic erections, *mawlyndi*, or *mawkjat*, may be described as follows. These generally consist of three upright stones, the tallest being in the centre, and a flat table-stone being placed in front. There are, however, some clans which erect more than three upright stones, as *ithawlyndi*, or *mawkjat*. As already stated, the *ithawlyndi* used to erect these stones, *mawlyndi* (the stone of the leg), at such place at which they halted for the night on their way to deposit the bones of their deceased maternal relations in the last sepulchre, or *mawbah*. The stones are called *mawkjat*, as it is supposed that the spirits of the stones of the leg, because it is the departed sit and rest their limbs on the flat table-stone. The upright stones are not, as a rule more than 3 or 4 ft. high, and are not massive like the great mawbynna, or memorial stones. They are to be found in great numbers all along the roads or paths which lead to the clan crematorium. These stones, unlike the *mawbynna*, have no names.

(b) *Mawbynna*, or mawbyn, are erected to commemorate deceased parents or deceased ancestors, and consist of 1, 3, 7, 9, or even, in an exceptional case, 11 [illegible] stones in front. The upright stones are called *maw-shyrang*, or male stones, and the flat table-stone *maw-kpathei*, or female stones. Turning to the plate of the Laitkor stones, it will be observed that there are nine upright stones, and one large flat table-stone in front. Counting from right to left, stone No. 5 is called *u maw kni*, or the maternal uncle's stone, and the stones to the right and left of it, *ki maw pyrsa ki paw*, i.e. the sisters of the maternal brothers and nephews. The table-stone is called *ka kpathei tynrai*, or *ka kpathei tynrai*, literally the grandmother of the root, or the old grandmother, in contradistinction to *ka*

1: Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

Iewbei Mynsaw, or *ka Iewbei kpoh* (the grandmother of the family, or branch of the family). It frequently happens that there are two flat table-stones in front of the upright stones, the one on the left being *ka Iewbei tynrai*, or the first ancestress, and the one on the right *ka Iewbei langkpoh*, the grandmother of the branch of the clan to which the memorialists belong, or *ka Iewbei Mynsaw*, the young grandmother, i.e. the grandmother of the actual family to which the memorialists belong. In olden days it used to be the custom for the clan-people to place offerings of food on the flat table-stones for the shades of the departed ancestors, and this is sometimes the case still; but now it is more frequently the custom to make these offerings in the *diengsang*, or clan puja-house. The flat table-stones are some 2 to 2½ ft. from the ground, and it is difficult to resist the impression that they were originally sacrificial stones, i.e. that animals or even human beings were actually sacrificed upon them. In connection with this theory I would refer to the interesting folk-tale about the Kopili river. It is here related that in olden days human victims were sacrificed to the Kopili goddess on the flat table-stone (*mawe-kpathar*) at a place called *Iew Kseh*, close to the Kopili river. A careful search has been made for this stone, with the result that a flat table-stone has been found near the above village, where goats are still annually sacrificed to the Kopili. The *doloi* reports that this is an ancient custom. None can remember, however, having heard that human victims were ever sacrificed there. Yet I do not think it at all unlikely that this is the stone, locally called *Mynsiep*, which is referred to in the [illegible] were the headquarters of the kings of Jaintia, there are very large table-stones. We know for a fact that human sacrifices used to take place at Jaintiapur. Is it possible that human beings were immolated on these table-stones? It would be unsafe to base any conclusion on the solitary folk-tale about the *Iew Kseh* table-stone; but the tale certainly furnishes food for reflection. The Khasis borrowed their religious customs largely from the Syntengs inhabitants of Jaintia, and it is possible that they may have obtained the custom of erecting the table-stones from the Syntengs also, [illegible]

1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

and that the latter were originally used by both of them for sacrificing human victims. Sometimes, immediately on either side of the *mawkoi*, or large central stone, there are two much smaller stones called *mawlieng*, or the stone of the drum, and *mawbah*, the stone of the plantain; the drum being used in all religious ceremonies by the Khasis, and the plantain relating to their custom of feeding young children on plantains. The *mawsaws* must be described separately from the *mawbynna*, because they differ from them in an important particular, i.e. that the former may be erected to commemorate the father, while the latter are set up to perpetuate the memory of the ancestors on the female side of the family. *Mawsaws* consist of three upright stones and one flat table-stone in front. The large central stone is called a *maw thawlang*, or the stone of the father, and the upright stones on either side are meant to represent the father's brothers or nephews. The flat table-stone is its *lyndoi*, i.e. the grandmother of the father, not the first grandmother of the clan, as in the case of the *mawbynna*.

(c) The *maw sakai* have already been described. They are erected to mark the sites of purificatory tanks, which have been dug so that the remains of deceased persons may be cleansed from the impurities attending on unnatural death, and to counteract the adverse influence upon the clan of *Ka Tyrsé*, or the goddess of death. These stones are sometimes called *mawtyrsé*.

(d) *Maw-shaphlait*, or stones upon which every traveller must rest, are to be found alongside all the principal lines of communication in the district. It may serve as an example of these stones to describe the very interesting collection of stones at Nartiang *hât*, or market. A reference is invited to the plate which gives a representation of some of the Nartiang stones. The great height of the upright stone will at once be seen; it is 27 ft. in height and 2½ ft. thick. This stone is the largest erect stone in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills at the present day, and is a very fine specimen. The upright stones and the flat table-stones at Nartiang are called "*ki maw jong Siem*." There is no separate designation for each of them. These stones are popularly supposed to have been erected long ago by two men,

of the Khasi.

Just as the Khasi are unable to explain how man fell into sin, so they also cannot explain why the rooster appears as mediator between god and man. The Khasi tradition relates of the rooster: u khun ka blei uba kit ryndang ba shah ryndang na ka kynta jong nga u briu, i.e. he who, as son of the goddess, gives his life for man, thus expiating sin through sacrifice and reconciling god.

The Khasi believe in another world and their attention is directed towards the comfort of the spirits of the dead. One of the main tasks is to give them nourishment (ai ban), which must be done, since the welfare of the living depends on the welfare of the dead. For example, if one can no longer get the corpse of the deceased because it is in a foreign country or has been consumed by wild animals, one takes his clothes at the very least and carries out the burial ceremonies with these. For only such spirits, whose burial ceremonies were performed according to usage and custom, can participate in chewing betel nuts in the garden (in the house) of god, whereas the others must wander around on earth or must continue living in insects, birds, and other animals. They do not believe in hell (in the Christian sense). The greatest felicity for a Khasi is "to chew betel nuts perpetually." Therefore they conceive of heaven as the dwelling (garden or house) of god, in which only betel nuts are chewed: uba ban kwai ha iing u blei (he who chews betel nuts in the house of god).

This cult of spirits, which relates to deceased relatives, is mixed with the ancestor cult. Thus the first great-grandmother of each sib (jaid) becomes a goddess (ka jaubei) and the first great-grandfather of the sib a god (u thaolang).

sour thing (u lamjew) be sacrificed! If this goddess is insulted by any kind of error, then she must be propitiated again, and this is done by the sacrifice of a goat, of a pig, or through the sacrifice of the gourd and the gourd bottle, or (for the very poor) through the sacrifice of water which one shakes out on a brass plate (ka pliang) or on a woven plate (ka pdung). It is she also who commands that one drive away the demon or the demoness, especially the demon who helps day and night (uba rap synnia rap sngi), by a sacrifice of money, a hundred or a ten, which must be brought to him.

Everything is at her command: thus the sacrifice of food which is brought the spirits (ai bam ia ki suidiap), the sacrifice of thanks which is brought the Thaulang (kaba ngah thawlang), the auguries (kaba tap syngiew tap rywiang) or the naming of children (tap lubri tap hyrteng). For example, if a mountain devil or a river devil is supposed to be driven away, she gives the command to ask the oracle of the house first and not to make a noise. Then, however, one should take a freely chosen sacrifice, such as doves, chickens, pigs, or goats and strew them with rice and then let them run off free. Anyone who catches them may keep them.

• [706] In this religion there is also something very painful and extremely difficult, namely finding out the guilt of one long since dead in order to atone for it again through sacrifice. For sometimes nothing can be found that is the reason or cause of sickness or trouble and therefore it must be the error of an ancestor that is not yet expiated. But this kind of investigation of devils is very difficult, since one cannot easily discover the connection. An experienced and worthy sacrificer who

782 Often the head of a sib (u knie u kypa) delays the sacrifice for a decade, often for a lifetime. From this comes the difficulty for the descendants of being able to sacrifice according to the ways of the sib, since the memory of their own sacrificial rites becomes lost by the years long pauses in the sacrifices. It is difficult to revive (kynroi) the method of sacrificing. Or the old people die off (or become Christians) and so the young people no longer learn which formulas they have, which invocations were customary, which parts (of the slain animal) they should take. The relationship with the ancestors becomes lost and as a rule they can no longer remember everything. [749]

When matters have progressed this far, then the Jaubei sees to it that sacrificing is not neglected by permitting the members of her sib to be plagued by the devils. Especially, she permits the devils of the mountains, the rivers, the water, and the air to make their harmful influences effective. Since illnesses always keep occurring and deaths [425] happen, etc., sacrificing never does quite die out and the religion of the Khasi which reverences spirits in the most varied ways remains in existence.

7. Prayer of Thanks after Receiving Good Health. (22)

22. Cf. also the prayer of thanks and entreaty at the end of the Nongkrem-Puja, Dr. Becker, Anthropos, IV (1909), p. 902.

Sacrifices are certainly offered chiefly in times of trouble. But the Khasi do not

764
782 baroh na tynrai ka iingseng iingkhad-duh? the chiefs of the family and the old family chiefs of the deceased from the tribal house?

If the goddess now sanctions it, then they gather the sacrificial gifts and the sacrificial money (which is often thousands of rupees) to use them for the festivities.

Two women then go to the various mawphew and reverently fetch the bones that were placed there. One woman carries the bones of the male dead, the other the female ones, and both bring them to the house of the group mother, where they are ceremoniously placed and decorated with flowers and beautiful cloths. Now the spirits of the dead receive nourishment (ai bam), in that a pig, a rooster and a steer are sacrificed. The best pieces of these animals are kept in a basket in the house for a later division among the participants. The rest is sacrificed.

764
535 Then there is dancing. (35) This cere-

35. Cf. Table III, Picture 2: Ceremonial Dance in Honor of the Deceased.

monial dance in honor of the deceased lasts either three or five or nine days, whatever seems best (and how long the collected money lasts). A place in front of the house is festively arranged and used as the place for dancing (lympung). Music is played and liquor distributed.

764
769 On the day on which they intend to transfer the bones, the drums (ka kaing) and the kettledrums (ka nakra) are beaten, [illegible] the flutes (ka sharati) are blown, guns (sulai) and cannons (ka man) are shot off. An ancestral

doll is made of bamboo and this is supposed to represent either the great grandmother (the *Jadwet* of the *Aib*) or the great great uncle (*wuidnia*). They walk to the *mwnion mwmwuce* (the ceremonial stones, ancestral stones) (36)

36. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 111, gives another description of these customs. He says: In *Cherrapunji* two dolls are made, called *ka puron* and *u tyngshop*. The former is supposed to represent the *Jadwet*, the latter the *wuidnia*. The dancers hold these dolls in their hands.

(28) with this ancestral doll (*u tyngshop*). While some dance, others set up "resting stones" or "foot stones" or "road stones" (*mwn kjot* or *mwn ïrooti*) on the way to the *mwn bah* for the spirits of the dead, where they can rest on the way to the common grave. These stones are about a meter high and stand three in a row at each place. In front of them a flat stone like a platter is placed on four small stones which form a base or feet (*mwn kjot*, i.e., stone foot). (37)

37. Cf. Table III, Picture 3: "Foot stone or road stone" among the Khasi.

On the day on which the dance ends they arrange *ka ïyngrei*, i.e., a marriage feast of the spirits of the deceased, who died in their youth (grown but unmarried or childless). For this they choose two poor old people a man and a woman, of small size whom they pay for this.

The man is the groom of the dead young girl, the old woman the bride of the dead youth. They have the two scramble for the spirits' rice (ki pyalaktan tsoi ka ja oualay) and have them jump over the rice mortar (thlong) and the rice pestle. Then arrows are thrown as far as possible, which the two people are supposed to seize. This game of catching means the driving out of demons who surround the new hab and wish to prevent the approach to the stones. Then one throws seed rice (= kaw rawal) on the road from the house to the end of the village. The two little people must now run with sticks (ka ki dangtuk) and thresh or beat the rice. This happens three times, one after another.

Then it has become bright day, a handful of rice is taken from each of the relatives, as well as the contribution for defraying the [92] costs of the whole festivities. Then they fetch an "alter he-goat" (a' long dawar), in order to cut off its head on the village alter (ka ka dawar ka thlong ka mulak). Now they make merry with drums and flags (ka kaing ka lima). The children and grandchildren sit down together and greet each other solemnly, [93] especially the "cousin" (a kha pha). Then a shield dance (saatiah) (38) is held. They

38. Cf. Table IV, Picture 1: Khami man, ready for the shield dance.

perform three rounds. Then a he-goat is slaughtered, and all dancers with the shields hop three times before the "cousin" (a kha pha). Each of the sons of the group house (Thlawhou) does the same thing.

Now everybody rises, and someone sacrifices the scapegoat a' long mait kauk. A

One month before the celebration [illegible] is passed into a [illegible] and good order in the house of the S'iem did and offered [illegible] the elder Biet as a 'test' (sacrifice of drink). This is done in order to inform the a Sudhra long S'iem (the spirit of the five great uncle on the maternal side who was the first king), the ka Biet long S'iem (the divinity who rules kings kings) and the a Biet Shilong (the god Shilong), that preparations are now being made for the Pcia and that they might help with them.

The a Biet Shilong plays the chief part in the whole ceremony. He enjoys great reverence among the Khasi, especially in the kingdom Hongkhem and Nylliem. Not far from Hongkhem a mountain peak rises 6,800 feet above the sea. It is the highest peak in the Khasi Mountains. Its name is "Shilong Peak." There is the seat of the god Shilong. The story goes that a man appeared here once, who said he [illegible] had not been but came of himself (the king). He also told the people that they could receive the kings. S'iem. So the god who lives here was called a Sha long (he who is out of himself), from which the European gradually made the word Shilong and also gave the name to the splendid mountain station in the heart of the Khasi Mountains.

After the S'iem did has determined exactly the day of the commencement, the news of this is sent out two weeks prior to the ceremony to the village elders (Rangbah Hoong). This is done on the day of the large market (Ri Kti), which takes place every eighth day. Two weeks after is the pom klang, also on the day of the large market, which is discussed below.

The way in which the invitation is send is interesting. A number of chains about 30 ft long are made of bamboo rings. These are called kynsih. One of these is sent to the oldest man of each village. Since the Khasi formerly had no script, this bamboo chain always served as a sign of invitation or summon to the S'iem for ceremonies, or of danger of war, or of court matters and such. The degree of urgency was given by the form of the links; in the case of great haste the form was length and flat, otherwise correspondingly rounder. The sending of the kynsih to the village elders serves now as a sign of invitation for the whole village to appear at the commencement and at the same time as a demand to gather together the prescribed sacrificial gifts. Each of the 12 dorpies, into which the kingdom Hongkhem is divided, must furnish a goat; each individual but must pay a tax (called pynkuit) of one rupee and four annas in addition. Very poor people only have to pay one anna or even only a half. The sacrificial gifts, such as rice, various sacrificial animals, fish, brandy

641 428 customs prevails amongst the Syntengs. Inheritance to the goat of Khasi (or chief) also passes through the female line, there being special customs of inheritance for each of the different chiefships.

649 3. The Khasis are divided into clans, or *kur*. These clans are strictly exogamous. Some of these clans derive their names from animals, insects, trees or fish,—*e.g.*, the *thaw* clan, *thaw* meaning a crab; the *shiah* clan, *shiah* meaning a monkey; the *rani* clan, so called from a fish by name *rani*; the *diengkieh* clan, *diengkieh* meaning a certain tree. There are other instances also. In each instance, the clan is said to have sprung from the animal, fish, or tree, as the case may be. There also appears to be a trace of totemism amongst the Khasis, although now-a-days their totems are not worshipped, nor do people abstain from killing, eating, or utilising them. A man when he marries does not cease to belong to the *kur* or family of his mother, but his children belong to the *kur* of the man's wife. Frequently the husband merely visits his wife at her mother's house. It is seldom the case that a man takes his wife to his own house, certainly not until several children have been born.

642 643 As might be expected, owing to the influence of the matriarchate, Khasi and Syntang women enjoy a much greater share of liberty than is usually the case with the sex. Although not wishing to make any general insinuations, there can be no doubt that Khasi women enjoy considerable freedom in their sexual relations. Women do all the trading, and like their Manipuri sisters make all the large purchases.

647 4. *Ancestor worship.*—The Khasis propitiate *Ka Iaubei*, the first maternal ancestress of the clan, by sacrificing a pig; they also sacrifice yearly to *U Suidnia* (the departed maternal great-uncle). Also when a family is in trouble, *U Thawlang* (the departed great-grandfather) is propitiated. Ancestors are further worshipped by the erection of memorial stones. These memorial stones will be noticed separately.

649 5. *Birth customs.*—At the birth the navel of a child must not be severed by any instrument made of iron or steel, but by a sharp splinter of bamboo. The placenta is placed in a pot and is kept inside the house till the ceremony of naming the child takes place. As long as the placenta remains in the house, the latter is sacred, or tabu, to anyone except the members of the family. On the day of the ceremony of naming the child, the father removes the placenta and buries it outside the house. Having done this, the feet of the father are washed with water taken to re-enter the house. When the ceremony takes place, powdered rice is placed on a stone (*a pruli*) and a small hoe and three cowries (the child is a male, and a *rani* (or *du*) and a star or (once since) (more or less the husband when carrying a load by the Khasis), if the child is a female.

etc. The targets are of two kinds, i.e., a sheep, which is made of a bundle of grass about 1 foot long and 6 inches in diameter, the target being fastened on to a pole; and from the rest of a plant called *adjidong*. The distance for the shooting is about 30 to 40 yards. 524.6

Before the shooting begins, a *nsuhlem*, or sacrifice, performs a *puie* and then the shooting commences. Each archer subscribes from half to one cent, the total amount so obtained is pooled and then wagered against a similar sum subscribed by the other side. While the shooting is going on the men of both sides dance and sing, and when there is a hit a great shout, or *kpikri*, is raised. The side that wins the match, after rewarding the *nsuhlem* and the man who makes the targets, buys a pig and some liquor, which articles are partaken of by the people of the village which has won the match. In the War villages, and amongst the Kyerepongs, sometimes vapors of considerable sums are made to large sums in these contests.

51. It is not intended to describe at great length the Ehwe religious system, but only to note briefly regarding it at present, a full account being reserved for the monograph for the preparation of which I am collecting further information. Ehwe religion is animism, or spirit worship. It may be divided into (*a*) the worship of spirits, (*b*) ancestor worship. 731

(*a*) *Spirit worship.*—The principal god amongst the Ehwes is God the Creator (*Ta'ki Kingdom*), who is sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine, the sex of the feminine gender being no doubt due to matriarchal influence. A yearly sacrifice should be offered to this god of a cock and a goat. The cock is sacrificed as a substitute for man, it being thought that the cock, when killed, bears the sins of the man, and that by its sacrifice man will obtain redemption. How the cock came to occupy this important position in Ehwe religion is not at present ascertained. Perhaps there was originally human sacrifice amongst the Ehwes, and the cock nowadays takes the place of the human victim. Other gods which are worshipped are *Ta'ki bog-bor* (the goddess of the river), *Ta'ki bagpoh* (the goddess of wealth), *Ta'ki am-bog* (god of water). An important fact to be noted is that the Ehwe gods or goddesses are never worshipped in the shape of idols in any form whatsoever. 732 733

(*b*) *Ancestor worship.*—I am inclined to think that this form of worship largely underlies the Ehwe religious system. The following are some of the ancestors or ancestresses who are regularly worshipped:—

(1) *Ba Soobi tyeme.*—the primeval ancestress of the family [illegible] A pig is sacrificed to her.

R. Gordon G-1 (no date) 1904 ARP Khasi ARP

(3) U'mai' nia, —or departed maternal great-uncle.
(4) U shaw kong, —or departed great-grandfather.

A very striking feature of the Khasi religion is the use of the leaves of the *diengiong* (*Q. lamellata*) or Khasi oak tree. The leaves of this tree are used to cover the sacrificial knife, a sprig of the oak is implanted in the ground before the sacrifices of fowls or goats take place, an oak bough is hung up inside the house along with the jaw-bones and horns of sacrificed animals and the feathers of fowls. A great part of oak is to be found within the areas of the sacred enclosures of the Siem priestess of Khynriam, the custodian of the religion of the State of that name. Another feature is the use of slices of stone on certain ceremonial occasions, and no Khasi religious ceremony takes place without the use of a small pond a long from which libation are poured out to the gods. Stones always accompanies ceremonies of any importance, e.g., funeral ceremonies, the erection of memorial stones, and the great puja of the Siems of Nongkrem.

12. *Memorial stones*.—These are without doubt the most prominent features connected with these people. The first thing that strikes any visitor to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is the immense number of these stones. The latter are placed in a line, a higher one in the centre, and lower ones on each side. The centre monolith is sometimes covered with a round flat stone. The upright stones are always in uneven numbers, being in sets of three, five, seven, or even nine stones. In front of each set of three stones is placed one horizontal stone, or monolith which rests on three or four small upright stones, the horizontal stone being raised to about one foot from the ground. If five upright stones are erected, two horizontal stones are placed in front of them, and if seven are erected three, and so on. There can be no doubt that these stones possess considerable significance, but what exactly that significance is I am at present engaged in investigating. So far as my information extends at present, I give the following explanation.

Memorial stones may be divided for the present into two classes—

(a) Stones erected by the family, or kin, in accordance with the Khasi custom of ancestor worship.
(b) Stones which are erected by children in honour of a deceased parent.

It should be remarked that both classes of stones are merely memorials, the remembrance of the ancestors or the parents often being unknown and the places where the memorial stones are erected. Taking class (a) first:—Supposing that five upright stones are erected and two horizontal stones as depicted in plate III.

St Gordon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR? Khasi AR?

Stone No. 3 , the middle is called U *Maw Kni*, i.e., the stone of the maternal uncle, Nos. 2 and 4 are called *Ki pyrsa*, *Ki pura*, i.e., the brothers or sisters, and the nephews or nieces. No. 1 is called U *Maw Lniang*, i.e., the stone of the dawn, and No. 5 U *Maw kait*, the stone of the plantain. No. 6 is called *Ka Lashai Iyawai*. The word *Iyawai* meaning root, *Ka Lashai Iyawai* signifies the first maternal grandmother of the family. The above is the system of naming stones in Mawlai Raj—other systems will be described in the monograph.

Class (b).—Stones of [illegible] : these are generally, I am informed, three in number, consisting of three upright stones as shown in plate IV and a flat stone in front, as in the case of stones falling under class (a) : Here there is a marked difference in that the big stone in the middle is called U *Maw thaneng*, or the stone of the grand- or father. Nos. 2 and 3 are the brothers of the male cousins of U father, and No. 4 is erected in honour of *Ka Lashai*, or the grandmother of the father, —not the first ancestress of the clan, as in the case in stones falling under class (a). The pot split at its top containing the jawbone of a bullock which has been sacrificed in honour of the deceased parent should be observed, vide Fig. 2. It was formerly the custom and is still in some places the custom, to spread offerings upon the flat stones to appease the spirits of the deceased ancestors. These stones, which are only 2 to 3 feet from the ground, suggest the idea of sacrificial tables at some time or other. Stones 3, 4, and 5 in Fig. A are between 2 and 3½ feet high, but there are several larger monoliths in these hills.

The description of the stones in figures A and B was given me by a man of some intelligence at Nongkrem, but many different explanations of the names, and regarding the significance of these stones, are given by other persons living in various parts of the hills, and it is not unlikely that the account I have tentatively advanced may have to be modified subsequently. The system of each clan, apparently, varies to some extent from the other, and in some cases to a very considerable degree. In the Jaintia Hills very large groups of stones are found near villages, which are thought by the Syntengs to have been merely erected by the sides of roads as *Mawsiang-thait*, or seats for weary travellers, or for persons attending markets. At one place in the Jaintia Hills memorial stones were erected to commemorate 5 women, *Ka Kynjai-sni*, who in generations past is said to have had thirty husbands. It may, however, be stated that no such polyandrous custom has been found at the present day. The stones are reported to be thirty in number. There are also many stones at a place on the road from Shillong to *Jowai* said to have been erected to commemorate those who fell in a battle between the Syntengs and one of the Khasi tribes.

9: Gordon C-3 (no date) 1904 AR7 Khasi AR7

784 K7 A8

As mentioned before, these stones are not gravestones, they are elegant, both the vertical and the horizontal stones, remarkably like the pictures of *menhirs* and *dolmens* that appear in Fergusson's work on rude stone monuments. It is a remarkable fact that Dalton mentions the existence of apparently very similar memorial stones in certain *Ho* and *Munda* villages in Chota Nagpur, and there is a drawing to be found at page 92 of Tait's Botany to the Court of Arn of a cromlech which is apparently very like the cromlechs so unobjectified to be met with every day in these hills. It is most unfortunate that the Khasis, owing to their want of a written language in former days, possess no written accounts of these stones, and that the Khasis of the present day are so very vague in their ideas about them, for I am inclined to believe that the proper elucidation of this question of memorial stones may prove to be the key to the origin of these people. I therefore strongly advise that a very careful search be made for similar stones, such as I have described, in other parts of India. It is possible that the Khasis may have found monoliths erected by some prehistoric race when they arrived in the Khasi Hills, and they may have adopted the custom of erecting memorial stones by the force of example, but the use of such stones seems to fit in with the Khasi system of ancestor worship, and it is remarkable that the shapes of the stones should be so very similar to those which exist in England, Ireland and Brittany, and I believe also in Denmark and Scandinavia. Is the custom of erecting such memorial stones in any way connected with people possessing the metempsychosis? The whole subject is a deeply interesting one, and I hope that it may be possible to throw some light on it.

[312]

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11. *Tabus.*—The Khasis have an elaborate system of *seng*, or tabus. There are very many different kinds of *seng*, but some of them are the following:—

Special tabus, at time of pregnancy.—(a) It is *seng* for a pregnant woman to accompany a funeral procession.

(b) It is *seng* for a woman in the first stage of pregnancy to finish any sewing which she may have commenced before she became enceinte. There is a similar prohibition regarding the finishing of the plaiting of wicker baskets.

(c) It is *seng* for the husband of a pregnant woman to thatch the ridge of the roof of a house at such a time.

(d) It is *seng* under similar circumstances to tie an axe or a dao in a bundle.

Ordinary tabus.—(1) It is *seng* to build a house with stone walls on all four sides.

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JHU
PLATE III.

Fig. Cromlech C-3 (no date) 1904 ASI Khasi ASI

[End plate I]

Re Gordon C-3 (no date) 1904 ART Khasi ART

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A.U

[End plate 4]

9. Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1972 ART Stand ART

The tall upright stones are called "Mau hyma", from "mau", a stone; "hyma", to make known, to be informed, literally a monument. They are also known by the term, "Mau shimon", the male stone, while the flat oast-like slab in front is called "Mau Kyrthai", the female stone, representative of all life, long in pain. My informant explained this by saying the monument would be imperfect without the flat stone or its female adjunct.

The ashes of the dead are never deposited under the horizontal slabs always to be seen in front of the upright sets, the monument having no connection with funeral obsequies whatever. The monument is purely one to perpetuate the memory of a person long deceased, who, as a spirit, has watched over or brought good fortune to a descendant, his family, or clan. Wealth or renown of the deceased has no connection with the size of the monument, which may be of any dimensions, from stones a foot or two and upward, but depends on the wealth of those who erect such memorials, and on the benefits the deceased has conferred after passing into the world of spirits and demons, for, according to Khasi belief, the spirits of the dead and demons are the cause of all joy or woe—they give riches or strike with disease and death.

These monuments are not set up facing any particular point of the compass; the front is generally selected, having reference to the site and its surroundings: thus a number set up together on a hill-top will be found facing outwards, those by the wayside facing the road; however, single sets, standing on a hill-top or open ground, as a rule, face to the south-west.

The history connected with the erection of some huge slabs near Cherra Poonjee will exemplify this curious custom. One of the clans, "Kle" in Cherra, is known as the "Kongtaring", and many years ago died an old lady of the clan, not famous for anything in particular during her lifetime, but whose virtues appear to have been great after her demise, for after this the Kongtaring clan, from being a poor one, rose gradually to considerable wealth; she, when propitiated and called on for aid, never failed her race, and in return, after some sixty years or more, they raised to her memory five wall-out stones, which are to be seen on the west side of the road between Cherra Poonjee and Sumeem, the central monolith adorned with a kind of rose cut in relief on the front face, and an ornamental disc on the apex. It would appear that she still remained the guardian spirit of her clan; they continued to prosper, and as a further token to her memory, they added in 1869 five more stones on the other side of the road, and in a line with the first set.

It may very naturally be asked how descendants sensible for-

9: Cadwallon-Austen G-2 (no date) 1972 ART Khasi ART

over what their ancestors are doing for them, and what their views and inclinations may be as regards the amount of aid they may give. To a Khasia there is no difficulty about the matter when in distress or requiring aid of any kind, making omens by the breaking of eggs (which I will hereafter describe) he appeals to and propitiates any one ancestor he may select; only one or two may promise such protection, and these it may so happen have died years ago. The benefit also conferred may be very trivial, and sufficiently acknowledged by the setting up of stones of small size; on the contrary, if great favours are conferred on the worthy we find large monoliths forming conspicuous landmarks on many a hill-top, scattered over a large area of country, and which are mostly known to the country round by the name of the individuals who have wrought so much good in their after state.

These stones are never erected in pairs or in even numbers; in counting over a very large series still perfect, I found them invariably in sets of three, five, seven, or as I have before mentioned in the case of the N-ngtaréng clan, in two sets, five and five, on opposite sides, to the same individual.* Even numbers are considered unfinished or imperfect.

A reference to the plans given, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, will show the various arrangements in which the stones are set up, both in a segment of a circle and at right angles to each other, as in fig. 3. The most common form, however, is in line, fig. 4. Fig. 1 consisted of a circular platform raised about two feet, faced with rough stones on the front face. These three examples were observed on the hill of Laiiung-kote, where the bane is held, and I have not seen anywhere else the monoliths so arranged; in other parts of the country they are invariably set up in a straight row.

These monuments are also erected for such a reason as the following:—During the illness of a person, every kind of propitiation and exorcism either by the breaking of eggs, sacrifice of fowls, pigs, etc., and by the examination of the liver and viscera, having been made, and then failing to restore him; the sick man may vow that should he recover, he will erect a set of stones to one of his ancestors, who, it is presumed, on knowing of the intention, will do his best to save him.

In setting up these slabs all members of the community are under an obligation to assist on such an occasion, and are not paid for their labour, beyond receiving in the evening a little food or liquor at the dwelling of the family who have sought the aid. The skilled workmen employed on the stone-cutting are,

* Three and five are the most frequent numbers met with, also very rare I have seen eleven.

9. Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 A87 Khasi A87

I never saw the Khasis engaged in raising a stone into the upright position, but I saw the space which had formed a sort of cradle on which the stones forming the monument erected by the Nongtaring clan previously alluded to had been dragged from the spot where they had been quarried. They consisted of strong curved limbs of trees roughly smoothed and rounded, and would present a very small surface to friction. These stones had been taken from the side of a hill near, and had apparently been wedged out of the face of a step in the exposed sand-stone strata.

It may be as well that I should here give some account of the funeral rites of the Khasis, which will show there is no connexion between them and the monuments I have been describing, and with which the other stone erections have no doubt been often confounded. In their funeral rites there is much that is wonderfully strange, and to those unacquainted with their superstitions, appears unmeaning. There can be no doubt but the Khasis have a very strong belief in a future state, and to say that they have no religion, as has been stated by some writers, is erroneous. True, they have no temples for either worship or idols, the religion of the people is principally a demon worship, and we find the Khasi ever in communion with or in the power, as he supposes, of the spirits of those who have gone before him. While, added to these spirits of their ancestors are numberless demons, male and female, ever ready, if not propitiated, to bring evil upon himself or his undertakings, and whose power even extends over the spirits of the dead. Every dark shady wood, every stream, every conspicuous hill has its presiding demon, which in many instances gives the name to the site. Thus, the hill of Lêrâ, in North Jaintia, beyond Nongjinghi, is the abode of a one-legged demon, whom to see is death, but who was occasionally heard in the dense forest that clothed the northern steep face of the mountain, to suit the credulous villagers of Nongtáng.

The dead are burnt on a funeral pyre, the logs of which are arranged very regularly, and the body lies in a sort of bed formed by them.

The calcined bones and ashes are collected and placed in an earthen vessel (small "ghara"), and are generally buried in some adjacent spot, a stone being placed over the vase for security; they do not, however, remain permanently in this place. Every family or clan has a separate receptacle for these remains, constructed in several ways, but always covered with a heavy slab of stone: these receptacles are called "Mau-bah," the great stone "Mau-shiang," a bone depository—lit., the "bone stone."

M. Schlagintweit has fallen into an error regarding the dolmen-shaped structures, and was not aware that this form is so

of a clan into commercial enclosure developed out of the custom of deputing the house of the clansmen in clan armory and renewing the relationship between the clansmen on the ceremonial occasion of *Shajmuskuk* when the house were finally transferred from *mawshiang* (armory of a sub-clan) to *mawbah* (armory of a clan).

Social bond among the clansmen is due to the performance of common religious ceremonies (*Iber*), worship of common deities and spirits of household (*Kiwiahni*), water (*Jaw*) and hills (*Kiwiathaw*) and observance of mourning for three days for the death of clansmen with the cessation of outdoor work specially with implements.

Economic bond among them is due further to the possession of common land (*Mukur*), which is divided into separate holdings held by families.

Sub-clan (*Ka-U'jem*)—Unlike the clan, sub-clan has nothing to do with the regulation of marriage. Its main functions are socio-religious. Mutual interest in the welfare of the members of sub-clan evinced in the observance of *sdaw*[2] in honour of the dead grandmother, profound sentiment grown out of the former practice of depositing the bones of the dead persons of the same sub-clan in *mawshiang* and the responsibility of bearing the expenses for *Shajmuskuk* bind the members together.

The observance of mourning on the death of a person of the same sub-clan for three days and the consequent

[2] Offering of food to the spirits of the dead ancestors.

25 Nakaro K-9 (1955-1956) 1967 ARP Khasi ARP

necessary. The chances of acquiring a piece of land nowadays are small, except for very successful men, and usually the size of the plot is only just enough to maintain one household. When this land is passed on to the next generation, the youngest daughter will hold the title to it. This fact tends to exclude married elder sisters from the right to use the land, since it is not sufficient for more than one household. Thus the ultimogeniture succession rule seems to have developed more sharply and to have encouraged limited inheritance in conjunction with the shortage of land.

This tendency creates unbalance in the economy of the households within a community. It is a usual picture in Khasi villages, for the bigger and well-built houses to be occupied by the youngest daughter's family, while the elder sisters reside in poor huts. Youngest daughters are usually landowners, while their elder sisters have often to become day-labourers after their marriage, unless their husbands are capable men, or their fathers wealthy enough to give them some share of their acquired property. On the whole, the variations at present between rich and poor are considerable in a Khasi community, in comparison with that of the Garo, where the economic condition of each household in a village is more or less similar. These differences are not only a matter of economic organization but arise from the nature of each social structure.

The economic and social patterns of Sohkynduh and Kongrem are very similar, but their dialects are slightly different: my interpreter, who came from Cherrapunjee, could work quite well at Sohkynduh, but at Kongrem he found some difficulty, especially with the speech of the old men, and with their religious expressions. The head man of Kongrem, who was quite accustomed to the Cherra dialect, acted as an interpreter for us. Such differences in dialect in the Khasi Hills are common phenomena. It is said that every valley has its own dialect. Differences are found not only in speaking, but also, to a certain extent, in culture and in social usages.

II. Village Exogamy

One of the outstanding features of Khasi social organization is the predominant tendency of endogamy on the level of the village, which contrasts with the structural orientation of the Garo village exogamy. This is closely connected with the distributions of clans and the nature of the descent groups.

The Khasi population consists of a number of *kur*, matrilineal clans, whose members consider themselves to be descended from a common ancestress. The members of the same *kur* have a common

19: Nakane E-9 (1959-1964) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?

614 [765] [769] *mawbah* (grave stone), to which the bones of all the dead members are buried. When the *mawbah* becomes full, or some members move away to a considerable distance, they provide another branch *mawbah*, creating a new *kur*.[1] Thus in course of time, every *shlur kur* occasionally branches off. Every branch *kur* has a different name, but can be grouped into a major *kur* thus forming a distinct exogamous group. Relationships among the minor *kur* of one major *kur* are usually known, or can be ascertained, so that marriages among these members are avoided. When the Khasi express this kind of group consciousness, they use the term *jaw* (own people). For outsiders, it is difficult to know through the names of minor *kur* whether *kur* A and *kur* B are of the same group or not.

However, neither clan solidarity nor corporative activities are found among the Khasi, except in those clans which are considered of higher status, and maintain a functional position in the political or religious fields. Such are the Siem of the ruling clan and the Kingkoh of the priest clan, etc. Among commoners like the villagers of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the importance of a *kur* is confined to recognizing a common ancestress, with a common *mawbah* conception, which requires them to maintain a strict exogamous rule. But whether of major or minor *kur*, its members do not meet together or have a common leader. Actually major *kur* of which there are a considerable number all over the Khasi Hills, have no clear-cut geographical distribution. Each is scattered over a wide area, cutting across territory which includes several villages, and mixing with various other *kur*. Indeed, some of them are very widely distributed geographically and found in almost all regions of the Khasi Hills. A minor *kur* is also scattered over many different villages, though it shows more concentration than the major one. Consequently a village may be composed of small segments of more than a dozen different *kur*. Even these small segments of each *kur* found in a single village have little or no sense of kin-group solidarity, unless the members have quite close kinship ties. In many cases, though some members have the same *kur* name, their relationship may be distant, so that they cannot always reconstruct their genealogical relationship. In such a case their behaviour and attitude towards the same *kur* members and towards other *kur* members show no difference.

[621]

615 Individuals are not grouped actually under the name of *kur* but in a smaller group of matrilineal descendants from one great-grand-

[764] 1. The Khasi cemetery dead bodies' bones are also are usually kept in a spot near the youngest sister's house which is the centre of a functional descent group. In many cases one finds placed in the *mawbah* of the *kur*. They say that these bones are to be collected and replaced into the *mawbah* some hundred years with a great ceremony. However, some of villagers are certain about the bones since the last ceremony was held.

dle ages, and in the decade ago U Kyrbut, a Khasi convert to Presbyterianism, left that church and founded a unique sect that blends something of Islam with something of mystical Hinduism and Christianity. The competition who most seriously threatened the dominance of the Welsh Presbyterians were the Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived in Shillong about 1886. Catholics have since opened a number of high schools, colleges, convents, and orphanages. They also established a technical school, and are now constructing a seminary. At the present time, one estimate is that there are about 105,000 Presbyterians and 30,000 Roman Catholics among Khasis. Members of other Christian sects are comparatively few; adherents to Hinduism and Islam are fewer still. Unopposed chiefly of Khasi women married to Hindu or Muslim men, U Kyrbut's sect is dying out, and the believers of Khasis are, according to their own terms, "Khasi" or religion. [Cf. Lyngdoh 1957; Morris 1910; Rogerson 1880; Singh 1886; Pugh 1961.] Superstitions. The great deities are two, an unnamed masculine God (U Blei) and an unnamed feminine Goddess (Ka Blei Nongsynshar Nongkhaneu). God created the earth, and in the beginning instructed man in cultivation techniques and also laid down the framework of a moral order that should guide his every move if he wished to pass God in heaven after death. This framework was they filled in by the first ancestors, who are therefore the authorities on the subject and are considered as the lawful (Ka mathei). U Thawlang (the father), and U Suidlia (the mother's brother). Very early, Goddess undertook to keep account of the numbers of human beings on earth, and this role was so important, relating as it did to the health and the multiplication of the people, that she became of major importance in the Khasi pantheon. When an least human society, God entrusted automatic punishments to the laws of natural relationships, and man finally decided that communal should go and intercede with God on behalf of humans. The cult went, agreed to take upon himself the burden of human sin, and received instruction in the correct divinatory and sacrificial techniques by which he - said he one of the main objects of the faith. Again, over a period of time, it was the ancestors who performed these techniques. Now, God is regarded as powerful and merciful, but passive. His punishments have their own impetus, and the expression of His mercy is exhibited in ritual. Goddess is more vaguely conceived, but is much closer to the individual. [But cf. Khonglah 1988, who enumerates of one double-sexed, great deity among Khasis.] Regarding ancestors, it is never clear from prayers whether supplication is to generalized ancestors or to particular lost ancestors of a Khasi's own matrilineage, and such a distinction seems not to matter. There are those other categories of minor deities: those who protect places such as villages, groves, or springs,

787
879
(162)
(319)
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771
773
(314)
776
771
(369)

19: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
[P. III B] AR7 Khasi AR7

household deities, and ancestor and malignant deities. 776
Deities of the first two categories are simply aspects 971
of the high God or Goddess. ● The earth is peopled with two great orders of land demons and water demons who cause all undesirable, unnatural, and otherwise inexplicable events, acting either on their own or as instruments in the hands of sorcerers. Apart from omens, both in nature and in dreams, 787
Khasis attach supernatural significance also to mystic 812
numbers, and to the colors white, black, and red. They hold especially important folk beliefs regarding 824
betel nut, paddy rice, gold and silver, and clothing.
Practitioners. The two classes of religious practitioners are the village or state priests and the sacrificers. 781
Both are male. They use the same divinatory tech- 783
niques of reading broken eggshells and the entrails 784
of cocks, and they both sacrifice cocks, hens, goats, pigs, and cattle. These skills are not taught to them so much as picked up by observation and confirmed by demonstrations of efficacy. A priest is elected from among the men of his clan to direct his skills to the public good until he dies, and his rewards are institutionalized and come from the village or the state. A sacrificer acts for private persons or his groups, as call, and is rewarded by them personally with gifts in cash or in kind. The sacrificer is called upon to explain and then to ritually remedy every variety of misfortune, especially illness, though his powers are nowadays regarded with ambivalence, and he is widely expected to become a sorcerer 754
sooner or later. ● There are two major types of sorcerer. One is the ritual specialist or sacrificer who secretly turns his skills from good to evil, manipulating demons to injure a person or his group, and acting always for himself alone out of considerations of jealousy or revenge. The other is normally a leading citizen, a woman who is so wealthy and successful that it is believed that she must keep a thlen, i.e. a creature which will bring her prosperity so long as she feeds it periodically with human blood. To provide this blood, the men of her household, or other males whom she bewitches with a special whisky, will indiscriminately murder anyone except a mem- [784]
ber of her matrilineage. The jaintias have an analogue to the thlen in their iaw, except that the ultimate result is death from illness rather than murder. Minor witchcraft can be perpetrated by poison keepers or persons with an evil eye, who are often women. Ceremonies. The important traditional 345
ceremonies were the life-crisis rituals relating to 346
pregnancy and childbirth, the naming of a child, and 353
death. Lesser ceremonies related to marriage and 744
divorce, and to housebuilding. All these rituals were 745
addressed primarily to the ancestors, and they are 746
still performed in modified form by many Khasis. 747
Other rituals, which were performed by groups such 178
as villages, clubs, local descent groups, or households, were addressed to the unnamed aspects of the high 782

17: Banerjee E-5 (1955) 1962 AR7 Khasi AR7
Smit

THE KHASI FESTIVAL OF 'POMBLANG'

S. BANERJEE

INTRODUCTION

The Khasi inhabit the upland of the central part of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam. They reckon descent through mother and the youngest daughter (Ka khadduh) of the house is the custodian of the ancestral property. Belief in the existence of spirits is strong among them and the causes of diseases are ascertained by taking recourse to the process of divination. They are ruled by different categories of Chief. The *Siem* is the highest official responsible for the administration of the state but a few small states are also governed by *Sirdars* with same powers as vested in the former although does not possess the same status. It is interesting to note that their priest whose rank is next to *Siem*, have also been allotted to perform this secular duties in some of the regions of the Khasi country. The Chief function through their respective council comprising elected members from different administrative units. He is rather subservient to this body as he is liable to be censured or even dismissed, if his activities are not in conformity with the Khasi traditional usage. Most of his directives are implemented through the assistance of his subordinates who are in-charge of various sections of the State. The Khasi place his grievance first to these junior officers for redress and justice, after which an appeal can be preferred to the *Siem* or any other higher officer as the case may be. One of the eminent States of the Khasi people known as Khyriem, where this festival is celebrated, consists of eight units for administrative convenience under the supervision of different grades of officials who participated in this celebration along with the *Siem* as representatives of the people.

The Khasi festival of *Pomblang* (Goat killing) described below used to be celebrated at one time in Shillong when the Khasi states of Khyriem and Mylliem were not separated. The first chief of the Khyriem state U Singh Manik shifted his headquarters to Nongkrem village after partition of the kingdom, which occured before the arrival of the British. He again moved to Laneherdem after a brief stay at the village of Lyngshing. He performed this festival as long as he was there, transferring it again to Nongkrem where he re-settled again. It was celebrated here for a long time and consequently it was named after this village. Although the ruling family had later on shifted its residence about sixty years ago to the present village Smit, during the time of U Klur Singh, Siem, it is performed regularly as *Nongkrem dance* which was observed by the author from 21st June to 25th June, 1955.

OBJECT OF THE FESTIVAL

It is being held every year since the days of U Shillong who was supposed to be the founder of original Khyriem State. They celebrate it to perpetuate his memory and pay homage with a view to ensure rain, good harvest, eliminating diseases and famine. He was worshipped along with other ancestors with view to guide the present Chief in his discharge of his duties and for the welfare of the people.

The house of Siem (iing-sad) where the rites are observed, is considered sacred. It consists of a big-hall (shlur) in the centre, surrounded by rooms. One of these on the north is used as a kitchen room (iing-chetja) where ritual

17. Banerjee E-5 (1955) 1962 ASI Khasi ASI Smith

objects are stored while that of the west (*kyrsan blang*) was meant exclusively for sacrificial goats. There is a very big circular courtyard in front of the building where the members of the royal family as also other boys and spinsters hold a ritual dance. The function is always held during the month[1] period of May or June and the actual dates are fixed in consultation with the Chief priest (*Soldier*) in such a way that the first day—*Pomtieh*[2] always coincides with the market day of Shillong Chota Bazar. The dates of the festival is then communicated to the in-charge of different units of his territory, through a wooden stick '*Kynrieh*' having a few knots of cane-strips, as a form of summons for attending the festival for five days at least along with subjects under their jurisdiction.

Important Participants

The responsibility of performing this ritual rests on the High-priestess (*Ka Siem Sad*) who is succeeded by her eldest daughter. Different ritual objects are procured by her, well in advance and it is obligatory on her part to join the ceremonial dancing, in which her daughter may also officiate on her behalf. U Shillong is worshipped by the chief priest while the other ancestors are invoked by lesser priests. The musicians (*Dhollai*) besides their normal duties, take part in the worship of the ancestors and they are presented with silk turban, jacket, cloth, by the ruling family for the services rendered during the festival. The *Siem* has no especial role except to supervise and evoke U Shillong for the welfare of the community. He is required to perform certain sacrifices, failing which his heir-apparent (*Siem Lyngoit*) does the same. He along with his sister (High priestess) abstain from taking rice during the period of celebration presumably to observe the sanctity of the festival as also to ensure the successful conclusion of the function.

Ritual Materials

The festival derives its name from the sacrifice of a large number of goats some of which were supplied from the State fund and from different units of the territory. Formerly at least fifty goats were required and each unit had a specific allotment but owing to the economic difficulty that the Khasis are experiencing, the number of goats sacrificed hardly exceeds twenty-five. The goats collected from the different units, are presented to the Chief at the midnight of the third day. Rice-beer, dried fish, fermented-rice, betal leaves together with nuts are also important ritual objects in this celebration.

Description of the Festival

The commencement of the festival was marked by the distribution of dried fish (*suit dokha*) to the persons assembled on the occasion, in the evening of *Pomtieh* (*i.e.* 21st June, 1957). This was followed by the dropping of rice-beer by the Chief priest over the five place of central hall known as *Ka sali-ka shar*

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[1] A week consists of eight days in Khasi Calendar the names are according to the places where markets are held in Khasi Hills.

Name	Market
1. Pomtieh	Shillong Chota Bazar.
2. Umai	Cherrapunji.
3. Yer-doh	Shillong Police Bazar.
4. Lyngka	Sohpetbneng.
5. Nongkrem	Nongkrem.
6. Mawlong	Laitkor (Shillong).
7. Byngkong	Cherrapunji Chota Bazar.
8. Shillong	Laitlyng Lok.

in which no mention was made except the illness of this figure in the name of U Shilong, Ka Shi Long Sam and U Sudora. Subsequently, the Chief minister (Khadar) conducted another duty Ka Synthar, by holding a yellow cock in front of mud offerings collected on a plantain leaf while his subordinates simultaneously danced nine times in their traditional way. Distribution of dry fish and indigenous liquor to the people marked the end of the first day and the ceremonies performed on this day were repeated on the second day (Lyoh).

The sacrifice of goats which was an important feature of the festival, was performed in the afternoon of the third day (Nam Sah) on the top of an adjacent hill where the Siem along with other members of the house, went there in a procession. The people danced all the time while it was proceeding to that place. The musicians were round the altar first at the top of the hill three in succession of a horse and pond square. The Chief priest facing the north, prayed to U Shilong holding a red-coloured cock in his right hand and killed it on the altar collecting its blood in a guard vessel. The entrails of the cock were carefully examined by him and then kept on a silver plate. The Chief priest threw some grains of rice before him as also over the yellow goat and prayed to U Shilong holding a dah in his hand. He then passed on the implement to the Siem who also prayed to the deity. The Siem handed over the same to a man (sengpong) who sacrificed the goat on behalf of the Siem. He collected some pieces of meat from different parts of the goats body (e.g. heart, lungs, liver, stomach, kidney, etc.) and handed them over to the priest. The latter cut each piece of the meat into two parts and offered them to the five ancestors.* The procession returned to the Siem's residence when the head of the goat was brought back by a member of a Khatbamon clan. It was then given to the High-priestess for disposal of the same in a manner as the liver. The day's rituals were completed by performing the goat propitiative ceremony in the midnight. The Chief minister stood near the fire made in the occasion at the verandah (Lyngkong) of the building and called the names of different units to present their gifts, in order of their seniority. The gathering that was watching from the courtyard shouted in their traditional way three times on receipt of the Siem's acceptance and the animals were led to the Lyngdoh for ascertain any before which they were not considered fit to be sacrificed to be held on the day next.

On the evening of the fourth day (Lyoh) betel leaves and nuts were presented to the members of the Siem's family by the people wishing them happiness and prosperity. The chief priest took his seat in front of the verandah on a line along with his ten assistants who were on either side in a group of five facing the north. The Chief priest worshipped U Blei Shilong and Ka Shi-Long Sam and the responsibility of smoking each assistant or assistants was devolved on each assistant priest :

Asstt. Priest	Chief Priest	Asstt. Priest
1. U Dienjer. 2. U Marchar. 3. U Ram Shilong. 4. Ka Phan Lem Shilong. 5. U Sobarnia.	6. U Shilong. 7. Ka Shi Long Siem.	8. U Phan Kynthei. 9. U Shyrwang. 10. Ka Lei Diengei. 11. Ka Siem Sngi. 12. Ka Shi Synthar.

* (1) U Blei Shilong (2) U Sudora (3) U Kpa & U Kha
(4) U Shabrow Sawre (5) U Bakri Shabo

After Lingoh II.—The Pnarbiang Nongkrem (in Khasi) 1944. Khasi & Jaintia Hills Press, Shillong.

The pens were sacrificed by the chief's eldest son (Sera-kiyamah) and in charge of respective ones at the open courtyard. The priests invited the ancestors and ancestors and called upon them by name praying (to God and Goddess, I offer this sacrifice to our ancestors did. Bless the Dove, his family and the people of his race. I shall [illegible] one again on the day after one year. Use every favourable matter by virtue of your power, bring clouds and rains to yield bumper crops and ensure a happy and prosperous life.

On the last day (Sungkiyam), a man of Skawah also sacrificed a pig in [illegible] an iron spike in its left armpit. Nine pieces of meat from different parts of the pig's body were again offered to their five ancestors. The Dove of the ceremony of his *Pantar* performed the last rites of festival by praying to [illegible] Bulong, when the Chief of Kanyah also also followed in the same way for calling the blessings of their Chief deity.

This brought the ritual to an end performed at the residence of Dove. The five pieces of goat's and pig's meat offered to their five ancestors, were then handed over to the [illegible] of the five units considered as somewhat higher in their kaum organization. They distributed them at a suitable place in their unit, making a feast as a symbol public declaration of the completion of their greatest festival for the year.

Dancing

Besides the ritual described above, dance with the accompaniment of music formed an important aspect of the festival. A dance known as *sebayahan* had been originally taken for the first, second, third and fifth day. This dance has some interesting features. It has to be performed in pairs. The first pair was constituted by Chief Dove and the Chief musician. Second to fifth pairs were between the leaders of the eight [illegible] with [illegible] of the [illegible] commanded the sixth pair. The subsequent pairs were formed by any two persons from the gathering. They danced only after leaving [illegible] before the Gah [illegible] [illegible] on the fifth day. The pairing was then not allowed to on completion of the last rite of the festival.

A [illegible] type of dance (*ke- and mereh*) was then performed in the courtyard by the musicians as well as by the professional dancers (*tang-ahak*) with [illegible] and [illegible] in the afternoon of the third day. The dance was always held in pairs first by musicians, and then dancers, who donned their traditional dress consisting of silk sarkan (*kampung*) decorated with feathers, coloured [illegible] coat (*lumpheng*) silver chains and coral necklaces. Later on they joined the procession, that went to the adjacent hill where after the completion of the ceremony of goat killing, a group dance was performed returning to the residence of Dove alternately.

This dance (*ked-mehi-jee*) was performed by the Sioma family. It was held early in the morning of the fourth day in the central hall (*Bilur*) and also in the courtyard. The men put on their normal dress whereas the women dressed themselves with gold and silver crown (*patungan*), numerous silver ornaments and different coloured [illegible]. They dressed and braided the hairs into a knot just as the sages. The High Priestess who also danced with the members of the Sioma' family, stood in the middle of the line and chief musician stood at one end. They held each other in hand and danced round the fire-place of the central hall (*Bilur*) in anti-clock-wise direction in accompaniment of music. The people assembled there, gave vent to their feeling in their customary way every time, before they resumed to make it three times. Similar performance of dances was also held in the courtyard.

There followed the dance of the [illegible] who were also wearing dress as described above. They kept their right knees bending their arms on their sides taking part a short cane with the music, that the movement of the feet were hardly perceptible. The boys took also in their dancing steps as were by accepted and joined with the girls making their steps with the beatings of the drums. The music derived from the dancing could be stopped only after completion of the dance which prolonged till evening. These functions served as a good source of amusement to the people, enabling them to have a good diversion from their monotonous life with an opportunity to meet their friends and relatives who assembled there from different parts of the hill.

Conclusion

From the foregoing description, it is evident that the Khasi has a community set up in which the gender duties are entrusted to the fore. A different role is followed in the case of religious festival. Every Khasi family entrusts the secretarial work of the house to the youngest daughter. The Khasi's elder (Rangbah) being the senior member of the mother's clan, is made responsible for the observance of these ceremonies which concerns the welfare of the subjects. The people attend the festival to seek blessings of their supreme deity U Shillong and their deity-ies in the land's traditional religious deity-ies to him. The rituals of the festival, instead of being performed by the [illegible] Priestess, were conducted by the Chief Priest (Suk Mai) to which he was allotted a very important position in the celebration. The musicians were given similar status owing to the belief in the sanctions of their music. It ought to be played in proper tune otherwise the displeasure of the deity would fall on them on finding any slight departure in this respect. For this reason, the music is considered as important as the rituals and the role of musicians was consequently given due recognition at every stage of the festival. The tradition of dancing one piece of Ningrong dao to mark the goal at the top of the hill was followed on account of the mountain having carried out in olden times the performance of [illegible] (Rai's grant) to the Siem. Another feature of significance also was also noted in carry the head of the sacrificial animal from the hill to the residence of the Siem after the ceremony, as his predecessors were [illegible] to enjoy meat during the period of [illegible] in the Siem. Such incidents were found expressed in a symbolic way through their observance.

The most important concern of the people was to maintain their ways of living together with their property and other means of subsistence. They worshipped him so that he might prevent the evil spirit from doing any harm and may in addition grant them bumper crops. To be recipient of such a favour, they approached him and U Shillong with gifts and sacrifices. It is not sure whether he is considered to one of their gifted ancestors but his important position in the Khasi pantheon enabled him to have some priority in their worship. The offering of sub-soil, together with a yellow goat, moreover, revealed his amiable and benevolent nature as the malignant ones got representation invariably with black colours. U Shillong was invoked simultaneously with other dual versions, with the hope, that all the deities would pool their supernatural strength in fighting the evil spirits before the latter was able to cause any harm to their crops or to subject in any way the fertility of their fields.

It would be interesting to refer here about the preservation of nine pieces of meat from various parts of the sacrificial animal. It may be a case of appeasement by serving him with some food but there seems to be something

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [